

there arose once in awhile, men, eminent in scholastic attainments; during the first few centuries, there arose not less than forty, the half of whom were fathers in the Christian Church, who figured as scholars, and many of them as writers; and during the time that elapsed between the fourth and sixteenth centuries, there existed upwards of fifty, who figured in the walks of scientific research.

We have seen that during the reign of Mahomet, who acted as a prophet, warrior, general, and conqueror, who subdued the Eastern world, the world of the ancients, into one vast empire, the Saracenic, that literature was almost blotted out of existence; and it was not until a century after his death that the Arabians began to restore the literature of former ages. Their writings may be divided into the imaginative and philosophical; the former of native growth, and the latter of foreign translation. In the latter, they were but the disciples and copyists of the Greeks. However, the literature of Arabia, which never rose to a very high standard, rose and fell with the *Caliphs*, a title assumed by the successors of Mahomet.

In England we have no account of the state of education, except so far as confined to the Abbeys and Colleges, previous to the reign of Alfred, the hero of fifty-six battles. This monarch did, says Russell, about the year 893, "establish schools for the instruction of the ignorant, and enjoined by law all freeholders, possessed of two hides of ground (about two hundred acres) to send their children to school; and he gave preferment, either in Church or State, to such only as had made some proficiency in knowledge."—King Alfred was a close student himself, and composed many useful works "to lead the untutored mind to the love of letters, and bend the heart to the practice of virtue."

At this period some other nations continued to encourage University education to a limited extent; but the

mass of society could neither read nor write.

Charlemagne, also, took an interest in the education of the people, and established schools for that purpose; but the schools established by these two monarchs soon dwindled into insignificance, so far as related to the instruction of the common people. Learning at this period was considered dangerous to true piety. The Latin tongue, the principle medium of communication, was but imperfectly known—and the scarcity of parchment, together with the expense of transcribing, rendered books so extensively dear, as to be only within the reach of a few. The effect produced by the establishment of these schools, were soon obliterated, and intellectual darkness again covered the earth, so far as the education of the people was concerned, and any advances made in literature, until the invention of printing, were confined to a few individuals, and to a limited number of subjects, connected principally with the mathematical science.

We are indebted to the Arabians for the introduction of Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, and especially for many discoveries and improvements in Arithmetical science. From Arabia, this thirst for literature extended into Europe; and in the twelfth and succeeding century, there arose several Mathematicians and Astronomers. At this time the minds of the mass of society, throughout the world, were grossly ignorant, and literature was entirely expelled from Greece and Egypt, its once great depositories; and now Arabia and Europe began to light the lamps of science. In the latter we find the invention of the Mariner's Compass in the twelfth, and Printing in the fifteenth centuries, were among the great advancements of the age.

The attracting power of the loadstone seems to have been known to the ancients in very remote periods; but its application to the purposes of